

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 MCT-01 NEAE-00

IO-13 /100 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3582

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB ECON PINS IS

SUBJ: CIVIL AVIATION EMPLOYEES THREATEN STRIKE

REF: TEL AVIV 3397, 7246

1. SOME 1,200 ISRAELI AIRPORT EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING PORTERS, SECURITY PERSONNEL, FLIGHT CONTROLLERS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES, ALL WITH CIVIL SERVICE STATUS, ARE THREATENING TO STRIKE BEGINNING MIDNIGHT OCT 28 OVER CUT OF THEIR SPECIAL ALLOWANCES. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL INVOKE GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY ORDERS, TO BAR STRIKE. HOWEVER, SHOULD EMPLOYEES DEFY GOVERNMENT ORDERS, ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS COULD COME TO HALT. AIRLINES ARE TAKING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES, SUCH AS ADVANCING EARLY MORNING FLIGHT SCHEDULES AND DIVERTING OR CANCELLING INCOMING FLIGHTS.

2. AIRPORT EMPLOYEES ALONG WITH AIRLINE EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN RECEIVING SPECIAL ALLOWANCES UP TO NOW. HOWEVER, IN MAY THE BARKAI COMMISSION, EMPOWERED TO ARBITRATE CIVIL SERVICE WAGES, RECOMMENDED ABOLITION OF ALL SPECIAL ALLOWANCES FOR GOVERNMENT

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EMPLOYEES AS PART OF DRIVE TO RATIONALIZE CIVIL SERVICE WAGE

SYSTEM. CIVIL AVIATION EMPLOYEES STARTED STRIKE ACTION AT THE END OF AUGUST SEEKING SPECIAL STATUS AND CONTINUATION OF THEIR ALLOWANCE SYSTEM. AT THE TIME GOVERNMENT INVOKED EMERGENCY MEASURES, BUT PROMISED TO OFFER EMPLOYEES A SOLUTION OF THE ALLOWANCE PROBLEM WITHIN SIXTY DAYS. WITH DEADLINE APPROACHING MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION CLAIMS THAT TIME HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENT TO OFFER SOLUTION WHICH COULD BE IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENTED.

3. BOTH MINISTRY AND UNIONS APPEAR TO BE IN GENRAL AGREEMENT THAT A NEW AUTONOMOUS AIRPORT AUTHORITY SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED, THEREBY REMOVING EMPLOYEES FROM CIVIL SERVICE ROLE AND THUS FROM RESTRICTION OF SALARY ALLOWANCES. IF THIS IS NOT FEASIBLE, GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED SPECIAL PROMOTIONS TO EMPLOYEES PLUS A NEW INCENTIVE PAY SYSTEM BASED ON TRAFFIC, PASSENGER, AND FREIGHT VOLUME PASSING THROUGH AIRPORTS, INCLUDING ADVANCE PAYMENTS ON THESE PREMIUMS SO THAT EMPLOYEES WILL NOT SUFFER SALARY CUTS. HOWEVER, INTRODUCTION OF ANY NEW WAGE SYSTEM WOULD DELAY SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT AND UNION MEMBERS REMAIN DISTRUSTFUL OF GOVERNMENT.

4. TRANSPORT MINISTER YAAKOBI HAS BEEN MEETING WITH UNION LEADERS IN ORDER TO AVERT STRIKE, BUT AS OF MID-AFTERNOON, OCT 28 NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED. TOP HISTADRUT LEADERS ARE IN THE MEANTIME TIED UP IN DISCUSSIONS OVER SEVERAL OTHER MAJOR LABOR ISSUES, SUCH AS A DOCTORS' STRIKE, A SEAMEN'S STRIKE, THE QUESTION OF REDUCING SUBSIDIES FOR KEY FOOD AND OTHER CONSUMERS' ITEMS, WHICH THE FINANCE MINISTRY DEMANDS, AND THE SCANDAL OVER ASHER YADLIN, THE RECENTLY IMPRISONED HEAD OF THE HISTADRUT SICK FUND. (SEE TEL AVIV 7246)
TOON

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